



NewsRelease

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Griffin Motorcycle Club promotes rider training, safety, esprit de corps for 12th CAB, Army Garrison Ansbach

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Ansbach, Germany – Members from the Griffin Motorcycle Club came together for a pre-holiday safety stand down at Katterbach Army Airfield here, May 21, to do motorcycle safety inspections.

“We will do safety inspections on each motorcycle and then take an hour or so ride today,” said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher A. Yarbrough, 3-158th Assault Helicopter Battalion S3 noncommissioned officer-in-charge and the 3-158th AHB coordinator for the Griffin Motorcycle Club.

Approximately 15 riders from the GMC went through the T-CLOCS (Tires-Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis, Stand) motorcycle safety inspection checklist to prepare for their group ride and Memorial Day outings.

“We have some new riders and some experienced riders,” said Yarbrough. “Safety, riding and fun is what we are after here today.”

Yarbrough handed out maps for all the riders and discussed the riding route, road and weather conditions and high traffic areas.

“We will ride slow and ride right. Today the idea is to build our riding skills as a group,” he said.

The 12th Combat Aviation Griffin Motorcycle Club was established in April of 2006, said Chief Warrant Officer Sean F. Merrill, Director of the GMC and a member since the club began.

“The GMC is a command sponsored organization designed to promote rider training, esprit de corps and to improve safety of the riders in the 12th CAB and U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach,” said Merrill.

The riding club meets every month, alternating the location between Katterbach and Storck Barracks, and currently has more than 100 Soldiers at any given time as a consistent turnover rate as new riders join and old members PCS from Germany, he said.

“At the meetings, we typically address new and old business. The ranking Safety Officer on-hand will then brief PLRs (Preliminary Loss Reports) as they relate to motorcycle operations across the Army footprint,” said Merrill.

“We also have classes that are given by individuals from different units in the brigade on topics such as proper motorcycle care, protective equipment, and trip planning. Members will also share lessons learned from close encounters they have had while riding on the economy, as well as recommendations or warnings on different maintenance and upgrade shops throughout Germany.”

Merrill added the importance of educating new motorcycle riders about safety precautions, accident prevention and personal protective equipment.

“The most important things to instill in new riders are positive habit transfer and law of primacy. That is to say if you correctly teach a technique to a soldier the first time and ensure that the first few iterations performed are to standard, the chances are that soldier will continue to correctly execute the task in the approved manner,” he said. “We try to instill in the new riders the street is not a race track and should not be treated as such even though the speed at which traffic moves here in Germany is much higher than in the states.”

Even for the most experienced solo rider, riding in formation with one or more additional individuals presents a situation where a thorough briefing is essential to cover contingencies, route selection, rider responsibilities and overall conduct while operating within close proximity to another rider is covered before the trip even starts, said Merrill.

“For instance, in a large group of riders, we would separate them by skill level. That way the less experienced rider does not feel he has to keep up with the more experienced rider and force him from his comfort zone.”

Merrill said it is by nature of its design that a motorcycle requires a heightened sense of awareness and coordination, therefore one of the most crucial safety precautions is the prohibition of drinking and driving a motorcycle.

“If the rider has any amount of alcohol, residual or otherwise, in their system the rider is at high risk to the severest of consequences,” he said.

“While the primary mission of the Griffin Motorcycle Club has been and will continue to be promoting rider training, esprit de corps, and improving safety, a secondary purpose is to ensure that European riding privileges are protected for the future by investing time and resources now in a proactive organization which seeks to reduce the accident rate and increase the experience level of all riders,” Merrill added.

(Information about motorcycle safety can be found at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center website: www.safety.army.mil)



12th Combat Aviation Brigade Griffin Motorcycle Club Member, Staff Sgt. Dave A. Hansen, Company E motor sergeant, 3-158th AHB, goes through the T-CLOCS (Tires-Controls, Lights, Oil, Chassis, Stand) motorcycle safety inspection checklist to prepare for their group ride and Memorial Day outings, May 21, at Katterbach Army Airfield in Ansbach, Germany. (Photo by Pfc. Sonya McNair)



Sgt. 1st Class Christopher A. Yarbrough, 3-158th ASB S3 NCOIC and 3-158th's Griffin Motorcycle Club coordinator, briefs the members on the weather conditions and safety precautions for their group motorcycle ride, May 21. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Dehart)